

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 346 568

EA 023 989

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TITLE A Lesson in School Reform from Great Britain.
INSTITUTION Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO ISBN-O-8157-1411-4
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 50p.
AVAILABLE FROM Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachusetts Avenue,
N.W., Washington, DC 20036 (\$6.95).
PUB TYPE Statistical Data (110) -- Reports -
Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Accountability; *Educational Change; Elementary
Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Governance;
Nontraditional Education; *Politics of Education;
*School Based Management; *School Choice; *School
Restructuring
IDENTIFIERS *Education Reform Act 1988 (England); *Great
Britain

ABSTRACT

In an analysis of school reform in Great Britain, this book shows how the landmark Education Reform Act of 1988 (ERA) imposed a radically new framework on British education. This framework is built on the same types of reforms that American activists have been proposing for years: school-based management (SBM), choice, and accountability. Methodology is based on field observation, with attention to schools in the disadvantaged neighborhoods of London and Birmingham, and interviews with teachers, headmasters, elected officials, administrators, interest group leaders, and academics. Based on the assertion that meaningful autonomy is not possible within the current educational system, a framework for a governmental choice system that is not a free market approach is developed. Because SBM and accountability are not threatening to the system, they constitute the preferred approaches to educational reform in Britain and the United States. However, choice alone offers radical systemic change. Following an analysis of the three choice provisions of the ERA--open enrollment, city technology colleges, and opting out--suggestions are offered for improving the British system. Reasons are offered for why the Conservative and Republican parties in Great Britain and the United States, respectively, are the most likely to successfully transform their educational systems. (LMI)

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